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SUBJECT: KUWAITI CHIEF OF STAFF MEETS WITH THE CHIEF OF
U.S. NAVAL OPERATIONS - A NEW VIEW AT AN OLD RELATIONSHIP

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for
reasons 1.4 (a), (b), and (d)

1. (S) SUMMARY AND COMMENT. The Chief of Naval operations, Admiral Vern Clark, met with Kuwait Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Fahed, on October 11 and discussed the state of the bilateral relationship. Fahed asserted that the bilateral relationship is now based on mutual desires and interests and is no longer based on the defense of Kuwait. Fahed added that the GOK shares the USG's interest in seeing stability and peace spread to the people of the region. The Chief of Staff's musings are similar to other statements we hear from Kuwaitis who are struggling to understand Kuwait's role in a post-Saddam region. We interpret his remarks to mean that he favors emphasizing strategic interests in order to build a relationship that will last no matter what happens to the north. END SUMMARY

2. (S) Kuwaiti Chief of Staff, General Fahed, received the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Vern Clark, for forty minutes on October 11. Fahed opened the conversation with a discussion on Iraq and then turned to the topic of the U.S.-Kuwait bilateral relationship. Fahed stated that the bilateral relationship is no longer based primarily on the defense of Kuwait. Touching on the same subject that Fahed addressed with General Abizaid a week prior, Fahed stressed that pursuit of "mutual interests" of peace and stability in the region should be the manner in which the relationship is characterized. Fahed added that "we don't just support you because you are the United States of America. We support you because we believe in your mission." Fahed finished by saying that CENTCOM sponsored military exercises must have relevance for his military, intimating that some of the recent exercises involving senior GCC military and civilian leaders were outside of the purview of his forces' mission.

3. (S) Admiral Clark later met with Major General Al Mullah, Kuwait Navy Commander, who brought up the topic of how to handle the Iraqis and the border issue on the water. The border issue encompasses the Iraqi, Kuwaiti, and, to a lesser extent, Iranian access to the Khor Abd Allah waterway near Bubiyan Island. Clark recommended that any discussion occur in a political arena for resolution as a matter between governments. The border issue is sure to be revisited as almost daily reports of Iraqi intrusions into Kuwaiti waterways are reported and the demarcation line is difficult to "see" on the seas.
LeBaron